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# Headlines Highlights for RA's Tablet - THURSDAY, March 20, 2014

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## WDBJ-TV Roanoke

Danville locals, council press Duke Energy to clean up Dan River now

***The company says it's working through "red tape" and predicting years to remove coal ash from the Dan River.***

By Justin Ward, jward@wdbj7.com

POSTED: 11:53 PM EDT Mar 18, 2014

DANVILLE, Va. - A federal grand jury was expected to meet today as part of a widening criminal probe into last month's coal ash spill.

But Tuesday night in Danville, the clean up of the Dan River took center stage.

Top leaders from the state's health and environmental departments as well as Duke Energy from

North Carolina said they're all working to remove the ash.

At the end of the second meeting, the city manager summarized the cities worries through a series of questions.

He asked is the water safe to drink, are the people safe, are the river and animals safe, and how does the city repair a damaged reputation.

Leaders from Duke and Virginia spent nearly three hours answering those questions. Duke started with an apology.

"I do want to reiterate again our sincere apology that this happened," said Mike Hughes, a top executive within Duke Energy.

The promise from Duke Energy executives to clean the Dan River and cover its cost didn't reassure a upset community.

"I drink the tap water, the drinking water. Beyond that many, many questions," said Mayor Sherman Saunders, addressing his concerns with the economy and the future of the Dan River.

Tuesday night Danville city council members voiced their concerns about the area's economy, the perception of a delayed clean up, and the river's health. Duke leaders said it could take up to two and a half years to move the coal ash ponds along the Dan River near Eden, North Carolina, and even longer to clean the river.

They said winter weather, heavy rains, and high waters have stopped the clean up process because the river is too dangerous for teams to clean the river. That delay though, shouldn't effect drinking water even for people who drink from wells according to the company.

"If there are people not on municipal water systems and want their water tested, we are happy to do that," Hughes said.

Duke plans to take the coal ash collected by the water treatment plant and pay for any clean up from the city and state of Virginia.

They confessed there is lots of red tape, from the federal level and two states.

"We will continue to collect fish samples over the coming years," said David Paylor, the director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ.

At an earlier meeting tonight, leaders from the Virginia DEQ, Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Department of Health said Virginia is taking legal action against the company after violating the clean water act.

"That's a violation of the federal law. The EPA has a claim with regards to that as does North Carolina and Virginia," Paylor said.

They again said the drinking water is safe, but warn to stay out of the river.

The focus now is removing a large clump of Coal ash collecting at the Schoolfield Dam in Danville. Duke is working with the EPA to hire a contractor to clean it up.

The DEQ director says a group of Virginia leaders are soon traveling to Tennessee to talk to state officials about clean up possibilities.

That state suffered a much larger coal ash spill in 2008.

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# Philadelphia Inquirer

## Sewage flowed for more than 30 hours into Valley Creek in Valley Forge park

**By Sandy Bauers, *Inquirer* Staff Writer**

For several hours Tuesday morning, raw sewage gushed from the ruptured pipe into Valley Creek at a rate of about 5,000 gallons a minute.

Then, when officials turned off the flow to the 30-inch sewer main, it caused sewage to back up at the closest pumping station, near Wilson Road in Chesterbrook, fouling even more of a prime trout stream in Valley Forge National Historical Park.

Overall, untreated waste flowed into Valley Creek for more than 30 hours, spilling several million gallons of sewage, officials estimated. A break occurred in roughly the same area six weeks ago, and in a different section of the same line two years ago.

William Martin, manager of Tredyffrin Township, which owns the ruptured pipe, said the pipe was repaired by 5 p.m. Wednesday, and there was no more overflow into the creek.

Full repairs to the road were expected by Thursday afternoon.

He said officials would not know the cause until a detailed analysis is done.

"Clearly, we need to evaluate the whole line," he said. Installed in the early 1970s, it is a 30-inch concrete pipe with steel reinforcing bands.

Throughout the region - and the nation - water officials are dealing with an aging infrastructure that will cost billions of dollars to upgrade.

But taxpayers and officials intent on reelection often balk at such projects, preferring more

visible, above-ground ventures - until a major burst occurs.

Valley Creek flows into the Schuylkill not far from where the spill occurred, but drinking-water intakes downstream in Norristown and Philadelphia remained unaffected by the spill, officials said.

Not so the creek itself.

Downstream of the pumping station, as it goes through the park, it hugs the winding Route 252 between a white covered bridge at Yellow Springs Road and Route 23. A hiking trail also runs along it.

But while the road was closed, the park's chief ranger, Greg Tinkham, said the trail remained open.

"At this point, as far as trails, it's not a huge impact," he said of the spill, adding, "Obviously, the creek's an issue. I wouldn't recommend anyone going in the creek."

He said the park's other trails are open and unaffected.

Although there was no noticeable fish kill at the time, members of the Valley Forge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, who were walking the edges of the stream Wednesday, were worried.

They said it may take several days for fish to die, or dead fish may already be in deeper parts of the stream, hidden by the now-turbid water.

Valley Creek is known for the exceptional quality of its brown trout fishery, said John Dettrey, the group's secretary. Anglers come from out-of-state to fish in its scenic pools, bordered by mature sycamore trees.

Ironically, he said, the fishery owes much of its success to an earlier pollution incident, when PCBs drained from the Paoli Rail Yard, later designated a Superfund site.

PCBs don't kill the fish, but the chemical accumulates in their tissue, and humans who eat the fish can be harmed.

So Valley Creek became a catch-and-release fishery, and the trout grew. Some now are 28 inches, Dettrey said.

"A lot of people will tell you, it's one of the best things that ever happened . . . if you take the view that trout populations benefited by people not coming to remove them," he said.

Drexel University's Charles Haas, the LD Betz Professor of Environmental Engineering, said it was unlikely that Philadelphia's drinking-water intakes would be affected because the wastewater would be so diluted by the time it flowed that far downstream.

But water officials remained alert.

A "flow model" from an early warning system estimated the plume from the spill reached Philadelphia's intakes at Queen Lane and Belmont between 3 and 4 a.m. on Wednesday.

Officials increased the frequency of raw-water analyses at both plants and did not see any impacts from the spill, but both plants increased chlorination Tuesday evening as a precaution, said spokeswoman Joanne Dahme.

Pennsylvania American Water, which owns the Norristown plant, also upped its chlorination, both as a precaution and because Wednesday's rainfall increased the turbidity of the river water, said spokesman Terry Maenza.

At the pipe break, workers from many companies plus consultants and regulatory officials worked throughout the day.

Trucks from Aqua America, a private water company, sucked about 200,000 gallons of sewage out of the creek and transported it to a nearby treatment plant run by the Valley Forge Sewer Authority, where the broken pipelines would have deposited it.

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# New York Times

## White House to Introduce Climate Data Website

**By CORAL DAVENPORT** MARCH 19, 2014

WASHINGTON — President Obama wants Americans to see how climate change could deluge or destroy their own backyards — and to make it as easy as opening a web-based app.

As part of an effort to make the public see global warming as a tangible and immediate problem, the White House on Wednesday inaugurated a website, [climate.data.gov](http://climate.data.gov), aimed at turning scientific data about projected droughts and wildfires and the rise in sea levels into eye-catching digital presentations that can be mapped using simple software apps.

The project is the brainchild of Mr. Obama's counselor, John D. Podesta, and the White House science adviser, John P. Holdren.

The effort comes as Mr. Obama prepares to announce a set of aggressive climate change regulations aimed at limiting emissions from coal-fired plants. Although a poll by the Pew Research Center last October found that 67 percent of Americans believe that global warming is happening, a Pew poll in January showed that Americans ranked global warming as 19th on a list of 20 issues for Congress and the president.

Mr. Podesta has taken on the uphill task of building a political case for the climate rules, both by defusing the opposition and by trying to create an urgent sense among Americans that they are necessary. The website is the latest step in that strategy.

“Localizing this information gives a sense of how this affects people and spurs action,” Mr. Podesta told a small group of reporters at the White House on Wednesday. “If you’re thinking about this from the perspective of how your local community will be affected, it’s likely to change that question of salience.”

Initially, the website will serve mostly as a clearinghouse for climate science data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Defense Department and NASA. The first batch of data will focus on coastal flooding and the rise in sea levels.

Most users will not be able to do much yet on their own. Instead, NASA and NOAA will call on researchers and private companies to create software simulations illustrating the impact of rising sea levels.

Some major software and mapping companies have already expressed interest in using the climate data. Chief among them are Google and Esri, a Redlands, Calif., company that supplies mapping and geographic information systems software to federal agencies, including the C.I.A., and city and local governments. Company executives say they anticipate a strong interest in the data. “There’s a market for this,” said Jack Dangermond, Esri’s chief executive, who joined Mr. Podesta and Mr. Holdren at the White House. “We’re excited to use it. Reading climate data in real time is unusual.”

Esri’s mapping programs already layer census and income data on top of geographical data. The company has used government data on the projected rise in sea levels to create an interactive map of what will happen, for example, should a hurricane hit the town of Gloucester, Mass. The digital map shows how flooding will affect specific buildings, roads, houses, schools, and low-income and older residents.

White House officials hope that if city planners and homeowners around the country see such vivid digital projections of the impact of climate change in their backyards, it could melt political resistance to climate policy and create a new impetus for action. In 2012 as North Carolina was creating a development plan, the state legislature voted to disregard scientific projections that climate change would cause rising sea levels.

“If people in North Carolina had had this initiative, that decision would have been less likely,” Mr. Holdren told reporters at the White House.

Google also hopes to combine its mapping technology with the government climate data. “What if we could make information about sea-level rise, extreme heat and drought as simple to digest and interactive as using Google Maps to get directions?” said Rebecca Moore, the engineering manager of Google Earth, who was also at the White House. “That is not possible, but we think

it's possible to get a lot closer. There's the possibility to create a living, breathing dashboard in a way people can understand and relate to."

White House officials said they hoped to help recreate the success of desktop and mobile apps and software that were built by private companies using government data, like on the real estate sites Trulia, Redfin and Zillow. Those apps use information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau to help buyers make more informed decisions about buying a home.

But the research and projections on climate change are vastly more complex than simple housing, labor and census statistics. Although a number of scientific reports have reached the consensus that carbon pollution from the burning of fossil fuels has warmed the planet — leading to a future of rising sea levels, melting land ice, an increase in the most damaging types of hurricanes, and drought in some places and deluges in others — scientists warn against trying to use that data to model precisely what will happen.

"The essence of dealing with climate change is not so much about identifying specific impacts at a specific time in the future, it's about managing risk," Christopher B. Field, the director of the department of global ecology at Stanford University, said in February.

But Anthony Janetos, director of the Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future at Boston University, said there was still much merit to the effort.

"With respect to some aspects of the physical climate system, like sea-level rise, we're on firm enough ground that you can do this kind of risk analysis," he said. For software that will make sense of the government's climate data, he added, "there will be a market."

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# Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

## Letter: The air quality battle is far from over

March 20, 2014 12:00 AM

The recent article about PM2.5 emissions (["Allegheny County Air Quality Meets All PM2.5 Federal Standards for First Time,"](#) March 15) makes an important point. In order for our region to comply with federal air quality standards, the county must post three consecutive years of data showing these fine particulate pollution levels are at or below federal standards.

The Health Department's announcement is a welcome sign of progress, but residents should not think that the air is healthy just yet. Our air is still making people sick, and we should not settle for anything less than consistently clean, healthy air for our kids and our families.

Work remains to improve air quality in the region, and PM2.5 levels are still a concern locally.

On average, the concentration of PM2.5 in Pittsburgh is worse than 90 percent of the United States. And what about the levels of other harmful air pollutants like sulfur dioxide? There is plenty of evidence that we have a long way to go. The air monitors in our region for levels of sulfur dioxide have not yet reached the federal standard. In fact, the monitors show almost twice the acceptable levels.

It is not a given that our air will stay in compliance in 2014. Residents in the Mon Valley have already had several red alert days since the first of the year. And Shenango coke works had one or more air violations on 330 days in a 432-day period over 2012 and 2013.

The county's announcement is an important step forward, but more work remains to be done. As a mom of a child with asthma, I can certainly attest to that.

**MICHELLE NACCARATI-CHAPKIS**

Executive Director

Women for a Healthy Environment

Squirrel Hill

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# Washington Post

Federal Eye: Feds talk: What is telework really like?

**By Josh Hicks, Updated: March 20 at 6:00 am**

On Monday, we asked federal employees to share their thoughts about teleworking, something the government has been pushing for years as a way to prevent work stoppages during bad weather, reduce management costs and help workers balance their work duties with personal responsibilities.

Our questions focused on how employees spend their days at home and whether they are more or less productive while doing their jobs away from the office, as well as their overall perceptions of teleworking.

MORE: Federal workers, take our ongoing survey

By Tuesday, we had more than 114 responses. Not everyone was convinced of the virtues of telework, but the overwhelming majority of responders — more than 90 percent — expressed positive views.

Silver Springs resident Bethany Miller, who works for the Health and Human Services' child-welfare program, said she normally starts her job earlier and ends later when she is home, adding that she feels less distracted and accomplishes more.



“With no one to swing by my desk to chat, I am able to focus for longer periods of time, with fewer interruptions or distractions,” Bethany said. “I am also motivated to show something for my work so there is not the perception that I didn’t get anything done.”

Philadelphia resident Charles Kufs, a business analyst with the General Services Administration, had similar experiences. “I have the quiet and privacy that I can’t get in the office,” he said, adding that he is “much more productive” at home.

Kufs also said he tends to take longer breaks while teleworking, but that he puts in longer days.

Other federal workers said they find it tough to work from home.

“Just too many distractions for me,” said a U.S. Geological Survey scientist who asked to remain anonymous. “It may work for some, particularly those who spend a long time on commute. But it does not work for me.”

Saving on commute times was a recurring theme in the responses. Lynn Miller, a Beallsville, Md. resident and economist with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, said telework eliminates three-hours of daily travel to and from her office.

“It’s brilliant,” the 23-year federal employee said. “I stayed with the government because of telework. I’ve been able to spend time with my kids, be there for them most of the time and get a ton of work done in peace and quiet.”

In terms of productivity, Lynn said her supervisors measure her progress by how much she accomplishes, regardless of whether she works from home or not. She said she is “significantly more productive” while teleworking.

Colorado Springs, Colo., resident Lee Espino, a Defense Department auditor, said he tends to work a bit slower from home, mainly because he can’t access files as quickly as usual.

Espino added that he suspects some federal employees may be abusing the telework option. “I have heard people say they take care of kids or family members when they are suppose to be teleworking,” he said. “Teleworking rules strictly forbid taking care of kids or family members as a reason to telework.”

Similar to Espino, NOAA scientist Dan Winester, of Longmont, Colo., said he is “much less productive, due to lack of hand-on information (paperwork or computer files) and due to more distractions at home.”

But other employees said they have no problems with logistics from home.

“We have workstations that are docked laptops that we can use on our telework days,” said Fort Meade, Md. resident Robert O’Brien, a security analyst with the Office of Personnel Management. “It uses a secure VPN to connect to our agencies Lan/Wan so basically have all connections we need to do the same work we would do in our cubicles. Plus they give us

Blackberries to do conference calls and work-related calls.”

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# Wilkes-Barre Times Leader

## Shale coalition unveils new 'grassroots' program

March 19, 2014 11:18PM

By Jon O'Connell [joconnell@civitasmedia.com](mailto:joconnell@civitasmedia.com)

PLAINS TWP. — The Marcellus Shale Coalition, longtime promoter for industrial natural gas development, now aspires to advocate on behalf of everyone else who benefits from it.

On Wednesday, the coalition rolled out its latest initiative, the United Shale Advocates, as a way for those not directly involved with gas drilling to speak up to state and federal lawmakers and promote drilling's growth.

“You don't need to have a land lease for your company to benefit,” local coalition spokesman John Augustine said at the massive unveiling affair in Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs Hotel. “You don't need to have drilling in your backyard.”

Between 650 and 700 people — drilling and business leaders, labor advocates and chamber officials — those who have seen their bottom line grow due to shale gas production filled a boisterous conference hall in the casino's newly built convention center.

The new program is to use tools such as letters to the editor and rallies in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C., to keep lawmakers informed about how its members want policy to play out, coalition President David Spigelmyer said.

One such rally is planned for May 6 on the state Capitol steps to promote state jobs and energy production. More information is on the program's website, [www.unitedshleadvocates.com](http://www.unitedshleadvocates.com).

“It's an opportunity for us to engage folks from broad segments of the community,” Spigelmyer said. “Folks that are looking for an outlet to have their voice heard.”

The Marcellus Shale Coalition is a Pittsburgh-based trade and advocacy group with around 230 member companies.

One coalition spokesman, Patrick Creighton, said the advocates' “movement was born out of folks that come to us when we're out in the community,” people they meet who are not directly affiliated with drilling, but who want to see it grow.

Spigelmyer called the program a “grassroots outreach program” that will allow the advocates to compete with the anti-drilling factions on their own turf.

“I mean, our opponents have a loud voice. We need to exceed their passion,” Spigelmyer said. “After a record cold winter like this, it’s further evidence of how important this industry is for ... the Commonwealth. In 2008, natural gas prices delivered to your home were in excess of \$20 (per thousand cubic feet). This year it’s half that ... because we’re producing record amounts of natural gas here in the Northeast.”

The new program will not employ a lobbyist, though the coalition does have lobbyists on staff, Spigelmyer said. He said they aspire to educate lawmakers using grassroots methods.

State Sen. John Yudichak, D-Plymouth Township, welcomed the crowd and drummed up applause for the coalition, commending its efforts in bringing the crowd together.

“You deserve a rounding, standing ovation for putting 700 people here in Northeastern Pennsylvania to talk about the most important issue that’s happening in Pennsylvania; that’s the energy revolution,” Yudichak said.

Yudichak said that while the discussion in Harrisburg ensues over regulations, with recent decisions potentially hampering growth, he said the industry has undeniably helped many sectors of the state’s economy and deserves to be commended.

“There can be no debate in how important the investments that the companies that are represented in this room, how important those investments are in the Pennsylvania economy,” Yudichak said. “Pennsylvania energy equals Pennsylvania jobs.”

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# Charleston Gazette

## WVAW chief defends water firm's MCHM actions

By Ken Ward Jr.

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Knowing what chemicals Freedom Industries stored just upstream from West Virginia American Water's intake wouldn't have helped the water company better plan its response to the Elk River leak, the company's president said Tuesday.

Jeff McIntyre said having more information about Crude MCHM before the Jan. 9 leak might have helped his company better communicate with the public about the incident after it happened, but that having data about Crude MCHM and other chemicals Freedom stored would not have changed West Virginia American's decision not to close its drinking-water intake,

located just 1.5 miles downstream from the leak site.

Additionally, McIntyre would not say if knowing what chemicals Freedom stored would have helped West Virginia American work in advance to develop sampling methods, toxicological information or potential treatment technologies for MCHM.

"I'm not going to answer speculation," McIntyre said in an interview with Charleston Gazette editors and reporters. "You're asking hypothetical questions."

In a 90-minute discussion, McIntyre defended his company's actions over the past two months, saying the real culprit is Freedom Industries, whose poorly maintained storage tank leaked, contaminating the water supply for 300,000 people across the region.

"We're not at fault," McIntyre said. "We didn't cause this event."

McIntyre said his company doesn't believe the filters at its Elk River treatment plant were "impacted" by the MCHM leak but that the filters are going to be changed anyway, to address public concerns.

Work on the filter change is scheduled to start April 1 and could take up to 8 weeks, McIntyre said.

McIntyre also said he realizes residents are still concerned when the licorice-like smell of MCHM periodically returns to their home tap water but that he doesn't have any idea how long such problems will continue to resurface.

"I can't predict that," McIntyre said. "I can tell you we're getting less and less complaints. There is no end date on when we're going to stop working on this."

McIntyre said there was a fundamental misunderstanding of the flushing process recommended by state officials and the company. The point of it wasn't to rid home plumbing of any trace of MCHM -- and certainly not of its smell -- but simply to reduce chemical levels below the 1-part-per-million concentration recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, McIntyre said.

He said he trusts the CDC and had not read news accounts quoting public-health experts who questioned how the agency calculated its MCHM "screening level."

Repeating his earlier explanation, McIntyre said West Virginia American did not close its intake when it learned of the MCHM leak because doing so would have quickly depleted the water needed for firefighting and sanitation.

The plant already was low on water, because of weather-related line breaks and extra use by customers to avoid frozen pipes. The supply on hand could have run out within 10 hours, McIntyre said, and getting the entire system back up and running might have taken 30 days or more.

McIntyre recounted that West Virginia American officials had, at some point in the past, tried to get information directly from Freedom Industries about its operations but that Freedom declined to talk to the water company. McIntyre said he did not have details about when those discussions occurred or what was said.

However, he said his company did not try to obtain publicly available chemical inventory forms that Freedom had filed every year with state and local governments.

"We did not know what was in those tanks up there," McIntyre said. "I don't know the exact reason we didn't get that information."

*Reach Ken Ward Jr. at [kw...@wvgazette.com](mailto:kw...@wvgazette.com) or 304-348-1702.*

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